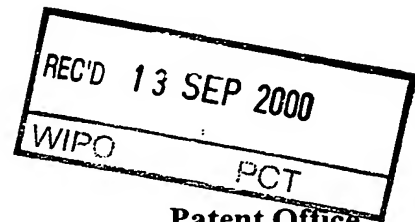




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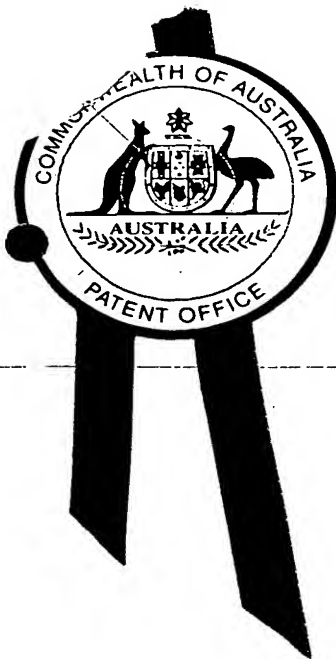
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I, LEANNE MYNOTT, TEAM LEADER EXAMINATION SUPPORT AND SALES hereby certify that annexed is a true copy of the Provisional specification in connection with Application No. PQ2428 for a patent by ARISTOCRAT LEISURE INDUSTRIES PTY LTD filed on 25 August 1999.



WITNESS my hand this
Sixth day of September 2000

LEANNE MYNOTT
TEAM LEADER EXAMINATION
SUPPORT AND SALES

AUSTRALIA

Patents Act 1990

Aristocrat Leisure Industries Pty Ltd

PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION

Invention Title:

Gaming machine with buy feature games

The invention is described in the following statement:

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a gaming machine. More particularly, the invention relates to a gaming machine of the type known as a slot machine or a fruit machine. Certain types of these machines have a series of
5 rotatable reels, each of which displays a series of symbols or a video simulation of such a mechanism while other types of machines are arranged to play video simulations of card games or other types of wagering games, such as bingo or keno. The invention has particular application to an improved game played on such a machine.

10 Background to the Invention

Players regularly playing gaming machines need to have their interests maintained. Therefore, it is necessary for manufacturers of these machines to develop inventive game features which add interest to the games provided on such machines in order to keep the players entertained and willing to
15 continue to play the games.

There is a continuous trade-off between what the players of the machines want and what the operators of the machines want from the machines. Naturally, operators want the players to stake more money per game so that the overall turnover is higher. Conversely, players will not do
20 this unless they feel that they are getting more for the extra money that they are betting.

Further, as the range of machines and games increases, it is becoming increasingly important to offer more options to the players. The more options that are available in one machine, the easier it is to maintain the
25 player's interest and the easier it is for players to be able to gain access to a machine that will offer them exactly the game that they want.

~~To date, most types of video gaming machines which are available to~~
players offer limited options. At best, a range of bet sizes and pay lines upon which the players can bet are offered. Certain machines also offer a double-
30 up option available after a win while other machines have various ranges of pay tables particularly for higher bets.

Summary of the Invention

According to the invention there is provided a gaming machine which includes:

35 a display means including a plurality of display positions for displaying combinations of symbols;

a control means for controlling operation of the machine, the control means including a processing means for processing data and displaying selected data on the display means; and

5 a selecting means operable by a player of the machine for enabling the player to select at least one feature which can be added to a basic game played on the machine.

10 The basic game may have no features at all. For example, in the case of a video simulation of a spinning reel game, there would be no scatter symbol or substitute symbol or feature triggered by the occurrence of a predetermined or random event. Instead, by means of the selecting means, the player may be able to select at least one and, preferably, a range of features that can be added to the base game. Various features may be offered. For example, certain symbols may be selected to pay as scatter symbols or substitute symbols as well as or in addition to the standard pays. Other
15 examples include additional types of pays, for example, right to left as well as the basic left to right pay or bonus features such as free games, bonus pays, etc which are triggered by certain combinations.

Certain features may be offered as no-cost features which are selected by the player by means of the selecting means. Other features may have a
20 cost associated therewith with a player having to make an additional bet to obtain the feature. Preferably, the bet to obtain one or more features is independent of the type or size of bet made on the base game. Thus, it is not necessary for the maximum bet to be placed on the base game before access can be gained to the range of features. In addition, the cost for the various
25 features may differ depending on the type of feature or range of features selected.

Further, the gaming machine may be a multi-game machine having various games. Then, the appropriate game may initially be chosen and, thereafter, the required feature or features for the game may be selected by
30 the player.

The selecting means may include dedicated keys on a keypad of the gaming machine and/or a touch or interactive screen of the display mean for enabling the features and/or games to be selected.

Brief Description of Drawings

35 The invention is now described by way of example with reference to the accompanying diagrammatic drawings in which:

Figure 1 shows a three dimensional view a gaming machine;

Figure 2 shows a block diagram of a control means of the gaming machine;

Figure 3 shows a schematic plan representation of a keypad of the gaming machine;

Figure 4 shows a schematic representation of a first screen of the gaming machine;

Figure 5 shows a schematic representation of a second screen of the gaming machine;

Figure 6 shows a schematic representation of one embodiment of a third screen of the gaming machine; and

Figure 7 shows a schematic representation of another embodiment of the third screen of the gaming machine.

Detailed description of the Drawings

In Figure 1, reference numeral 10 generally designates a gaming machine, including a game, in accordance with the invention. The machine 10 includes a gaming console 12 having a video display unit 14. The video display unit includes a screen 16 on which reel strips 18 are simulated. A keypad 20, which is shown in greater detail in Figure 3 of the drawings, is mounted on a midtrim 22 of the machine 10.

The machine includes a topbox 24 on which a pay table 26 is mounted.

Referring now to Figure 2 of the drawings, a control means 30 of the machine 10 is illustrated. A program which implements the game and user interface is run on a processor 32 of the control means 30. The processor 32 forms part of a controller 34 which drives the screen 16 of the video display unit 14. The processor 32 receives input signals from a first group of sensors 36.1 which are responsive to keys of the keypad 20. A second group of sensors 36.2 are touch sensors associated with, and mounted in, the screen 16 of the video display unit 14.

The controller 34 also receives input pulses from a mechanism 38 indicating that a player has provided sufficient credit to begin playing. The mechanism 38 may be a coin input chute, a bill collector, a credit card reader, or any other type of validation device.

The controller 34 also controls a payout mechanism 40 which, for example, may be a coin hopper for feeding coins to a coin tray 28 of the machine 10.

With the game of the gaming machine 10, a player playing the machine 10 has the option to make a bet that is a multiple of a base bet to buy an additional feature to the game. The additional bet need not be a multiple of the specified maximum bet of the machine 10. Thus, the player is allowed to, for example, double or triple their initial bet to be eligible for an additional game feature. In this way, even players who bet a single credit on one line (on a multi-line game), are eligible to buy features, by doubling or trebling their bets.

The extra bet that the player is required to make does not make any change to the game the player has bought other than to introduce eligibility to the feature. In other words, no additional pay lines are bought or linear increases made to the pay table as the extra bet is a dedicated bet towards the feature.

Referring now to Figure 3 of the drawings a modified keypad 20 for the machine is shown. Instead of, or in addition, to the touch screen facility in the screen 16 of the video display unit 14 of the machine 10, dedicated buttons 64 are provided on the keypad 20.

The keypad 20 has the normal array of buttons 66 for enabling the player to select the number of lines of the machine on which to achieve a payout as well as a normal array of buttons 68 for enabling the player to select the number of credits to be bet per line.

A "base bet" is represented by the buttons 68 labelled "Bet x credits per line" and the buttons 66 labelled "Play x lines". The feature of the game is that if a player stakes double the base bet by means of button 64.1 then, whenever a specified combination of symbols is spun up, certain reel positions will be held while the rest of the reels are spun again twice for free. For triple the base bet (button 64.2) the same combination would result in four free spins and for quadruple the base bet (button 64.3) there would be six free spins. Thus, if the player is betting two credits per line on five lines then the base bet will be ten credits. If the player chooses to buy access to the four free spins feature by selecting the "four feature spins (bet x 3)" button 64.2 then a game will cost the player thirty credits. The payline prizes will still only be multiplied by the player's bet per line of two credits, and prize combinations will still only apply on the five lines that have been bought. However, the additional feature of a specified combination of symbols awarding four re-spins of some of the reels will apply.

It will be appreciated that various other options could be provided by means of the appropriate number of buttons 64 on the keypad 20.

In this embodiment, other examples which are possible are, inter alia, the additional feature may be the purchase of a certain combination which, if obtained, will commence a free game series. Instead, an additional feature trigger symbol may be purchased so that, in addition to an original trigger symbol, the additional trigger symbol also provides a free spin feature. Yet further, a right-to-left payout feature, in addition to the more conventional left-to-right payout can be bought.

To ensure versatility, the player may be given a choice of which features the player wishes to buy. Then, various icons are displayed on the screen as will now be described with reference to Figures 4 to 7 of the drawings. In Figure 4, a basic game screen is shown and is designated generally by the reference numeral 50. The game screen has the usual reel strips 18 and multi-line pays as indicated by the arrows 52. If the player touches the icon "Prizes" as indicated at 54, a screen 56 shown in Figure 5 of the drawings is displayed to show what prizes are available to the player. By touching the icon 58 entitled "Features" either a screen 60 as shown in Figure 6 of the drawings or a screen 62 as shown in Figure 7 of the drawings is displayed. The screens 60 and 62 are similar with the difference between the screens being that, in the case of the screen illustrated in Figure 7 of the drawings, the bet to be made by the player is independent of the type of feature altogether.

The screen in Figure 6 or 7 allows the players to select the features required. The various icons illustrated as representations of the screens in Figures 6 and 7 are largely self explanatory. Suffice to say that a player can select various available options to construct their own games at a cost which that player can afford. The cost may be relative to an aspect of the base bet, ie the bet made for the basic game or independent of the base bet. In addition, the player may be able to nominate the amount they wish to pay for eligibility to a particular feature.

In this embodiment also various features may be offered by the machine 10 such as, for example, certain combinations of a particular symbol could trigger a bonus mode where for the next 10 games each symbol of another type that appears pays a bonus. As a further example, a bought feature could be that a particular symbol acts as a substitute symbol for all

other symbols or pays for scattered combinations instead of just on a pay line. Hence, it will be appreciated that a large number of features could be built into the machine 10 to be offered to the players. By the player increasing his or her initial bet, eligibility to the feature is gained.

5 Accordingly, by means of the invention a more versatile gaming machine 10 is provided which provides players with a greater number of options. In so doing, it is believed that the machines 10 will become more attractive to players.

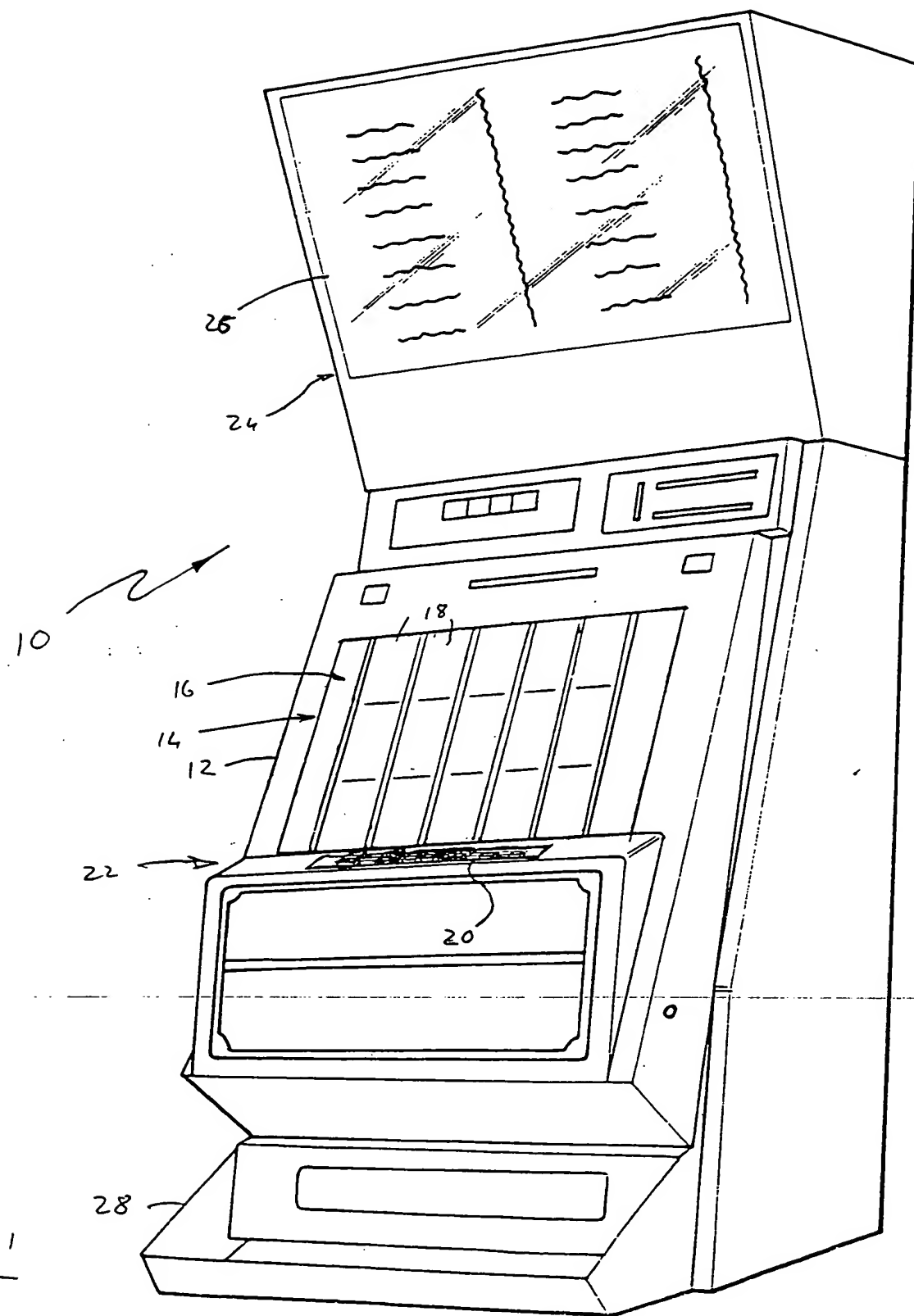
10 It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that numerous variations and/or modifications may be made to the invention as shown in the specific embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as broadly described. The present embodiments are, therefore, to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive.

Dated this twenty-fourth day of August 1999

Aristocrat Leisure Industries Pty Ltd
Patent Attorneys for the Applicant:

F B RICE & CO

FIG. 1



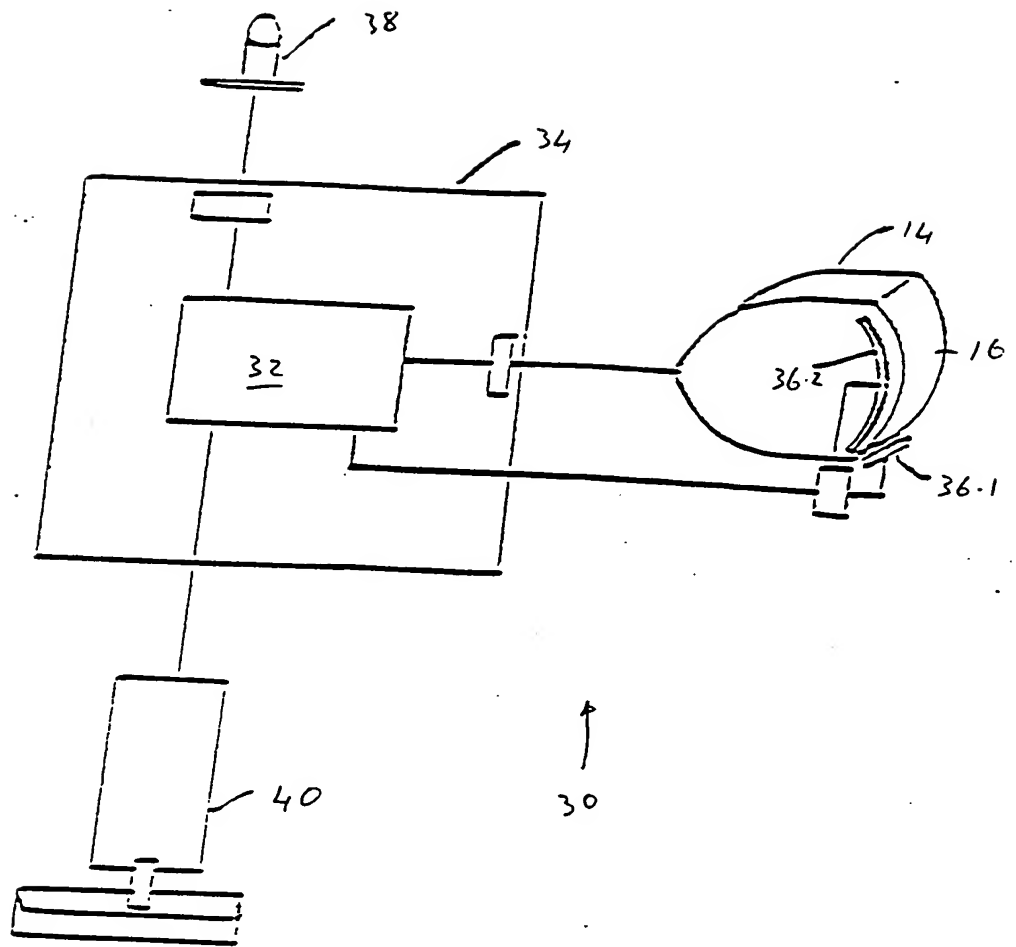


FIG. 2

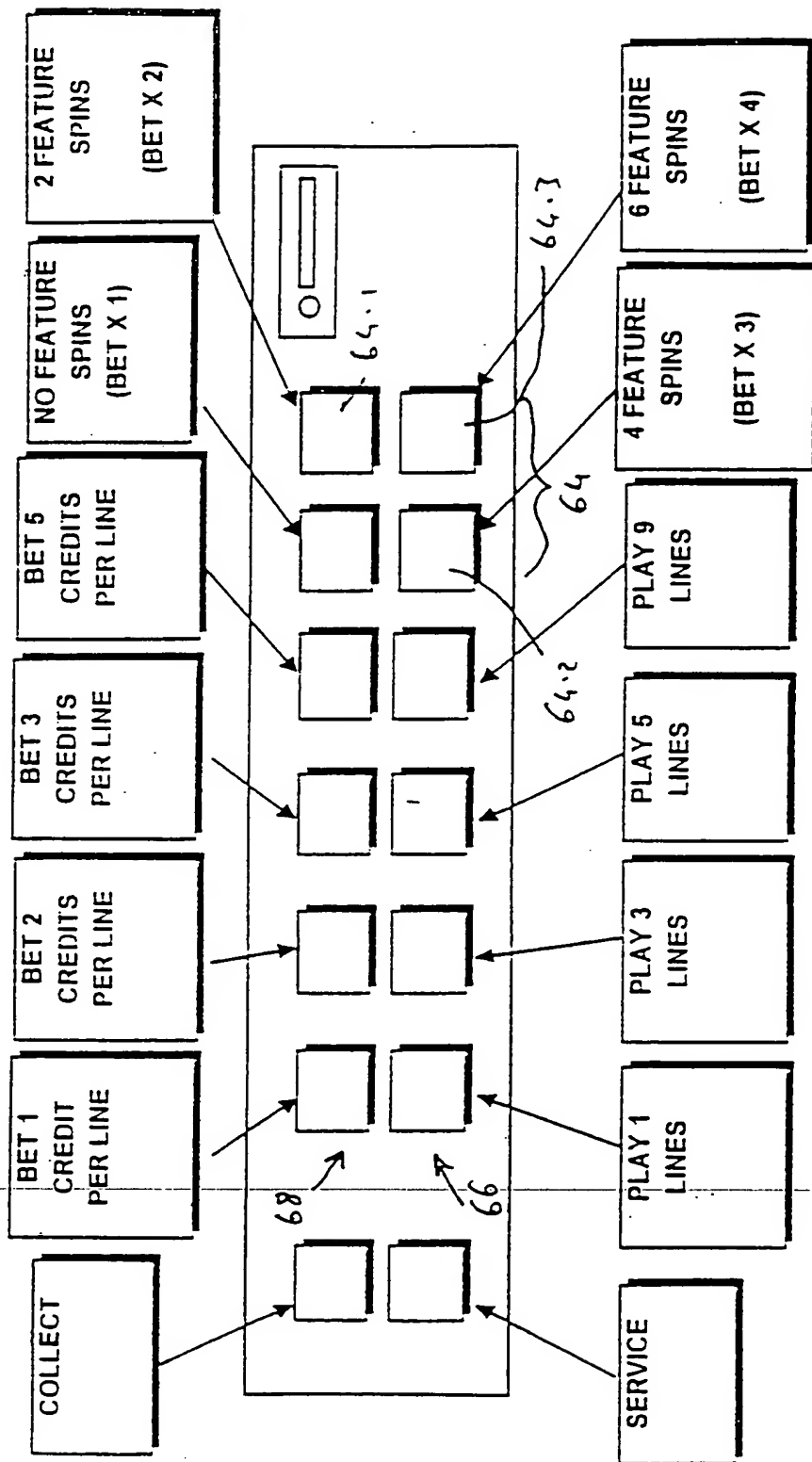


FIG. 3

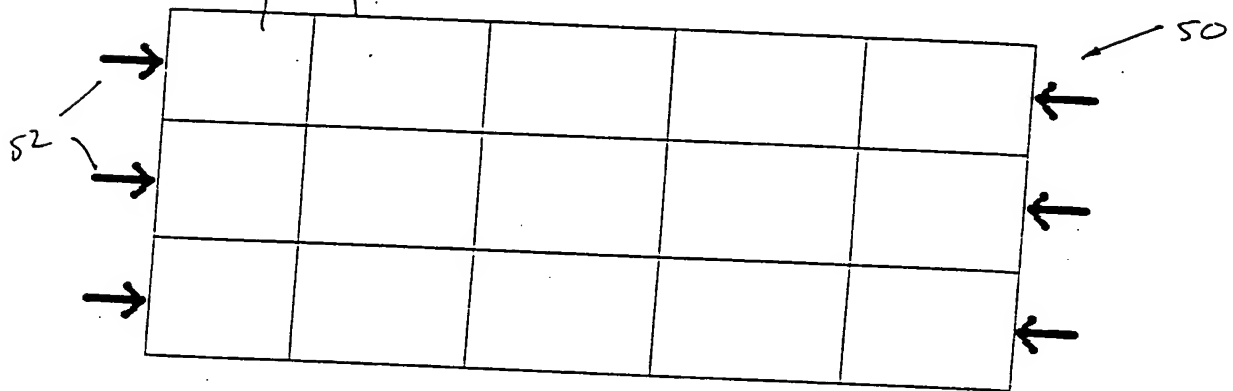
CREDIT 0

WON 0

BET 0

\$1 BUYS
20 CREDITS

Game Over - Insert Credit



QUIT

PRIZES

FEATURES

54

58

FIG. 4

1 CREDIT		
SYM A	5	1000
	4	500
	3	50
	2	10

1 CREDIT		
SYM B	5	500
	4	100
	3	50
	2	5

1 CREDIT		
SYM C	5	500
	4	100
	3	50
	2	5

1 CREDIT		
A	5	300
	4	30
	3	15

1 CREDIT		
K	5	300
	4	30
	3	15

1 CREDIT		
Q	5	250
	4	20
	3	10

1 CREDIT		
J	5	200
	4	20
	3	10

1 CREDIT		
10	5	150
	4	10
	3	5

1 CREDIT		
9	5	150
	4	10
	3	5

SCATTER		
SYM D	5	100
	4	20
	3	10
	2	2

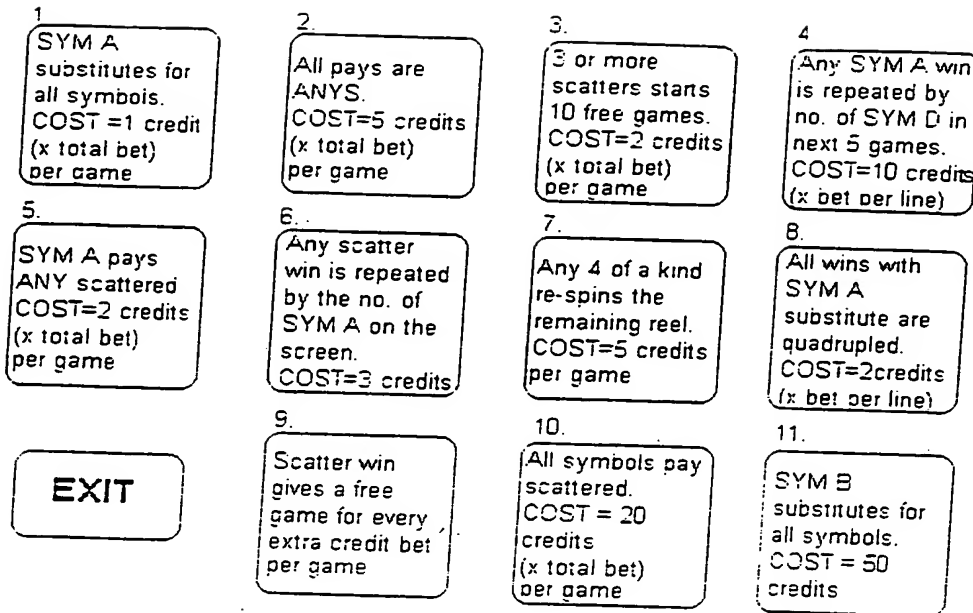
← 56

EXIT

FEATURES

5-8

FIG. 5



60

FIG. 6

1.
SYM A
substitutes for
all symbols.

2.
All pays are
ANYS.

3.
3 or more
scatters starts
10 free games.

4.
Any SYM A win
is repeated by
no. of SYM D in
next 5 games.

5.
SYM A pays
ANY scattered

6.
Any scatter
win is repeated
by the no. of
SYM A on the
screen.

7.
Any 4 of a kind
re-spins the
remaining reel.

8.
All wins with
SYM A
substitute are
quadrupled.

Cost is 1 credit per
game for each feature
selected or 5 features
for 4 credits per game

EXIT

9.
Scatter win
gives
5 bonus games
where all wins
are doubled.

10.
All symbols pay
scattered.

11.
SYM B
substitutes for
all symbols.

62

FIG. 7

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